SIG
#7
$2.95
Nightmares
& Fairy Tales

Nightmares and Fairy Tales, Issue 7

Story – Serena Valentino

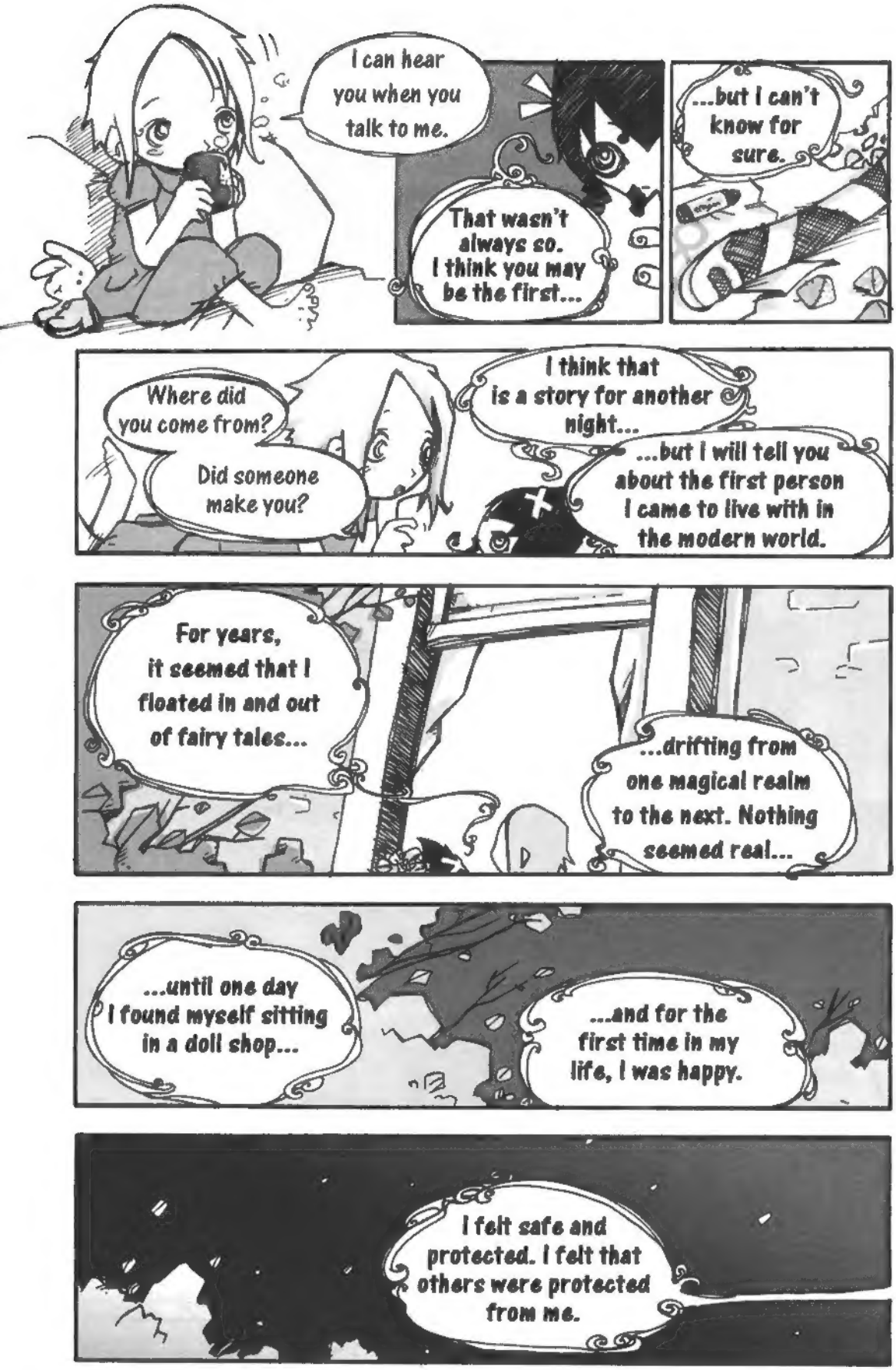
Art – FSc

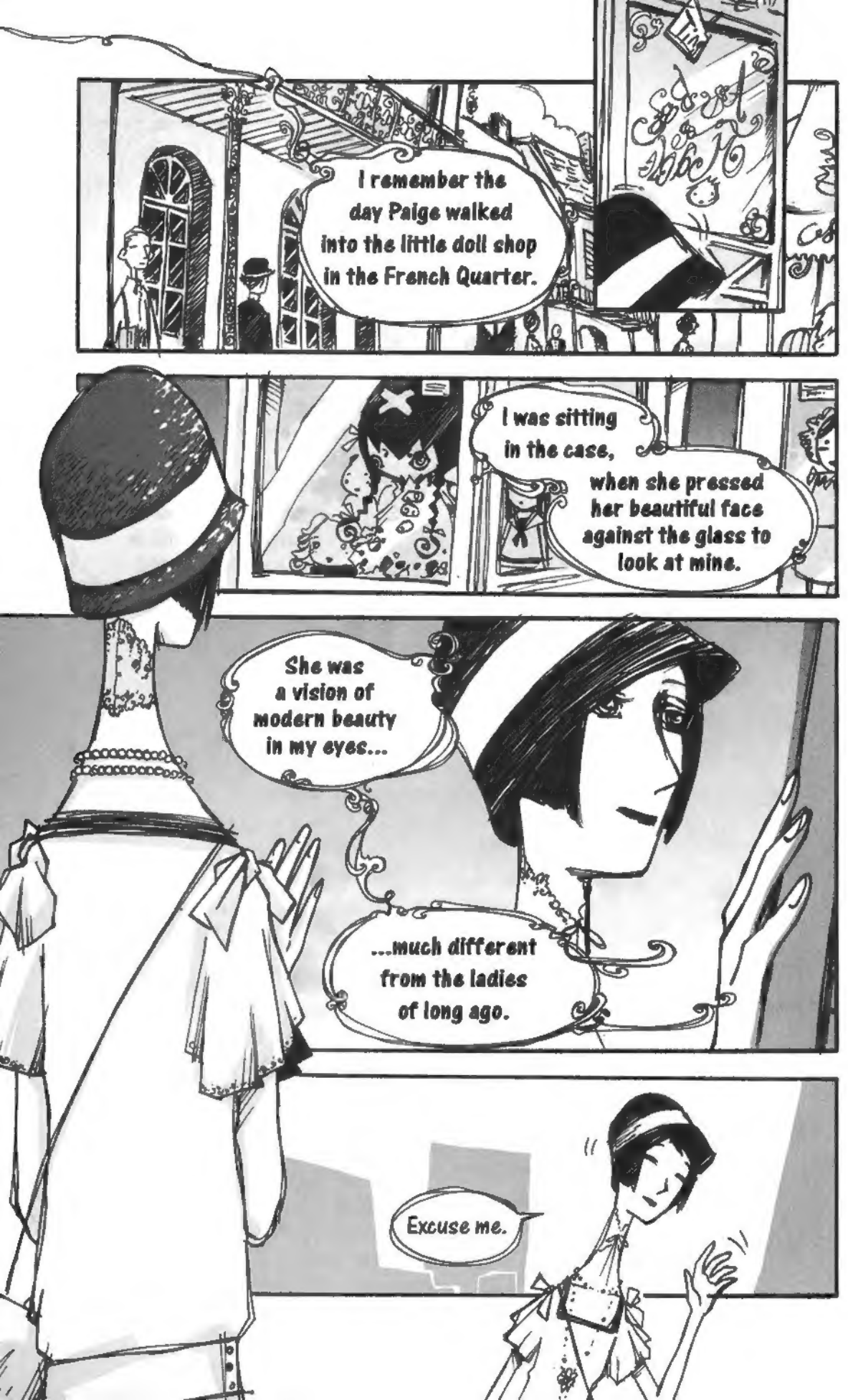
Lettering - Joshua Archer Editrix - Julia Dvorin

The Ghost and the Doll Shop – Paige's Story

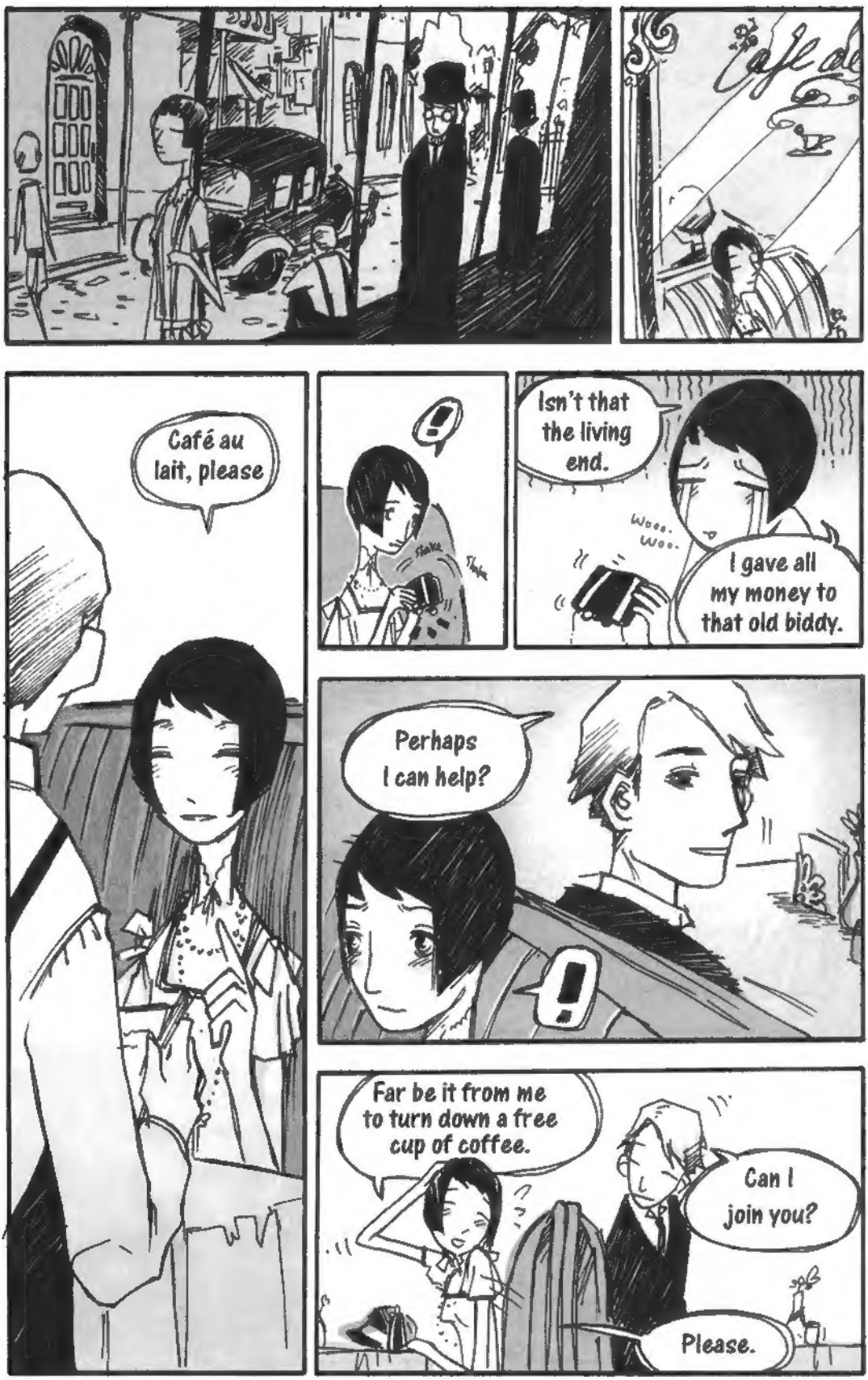
Nightmares & Fairy Tales, issue 7, Dec. 2003. Published by Slave Labor Graphics, P.O. Box 26427, San Jose, CA 95159-6427. All contents are © & ™ Serena Valentino & Foo Swee Chin (FSc). No part of this comic may be reproduced without the written permission of Serena Valentino, Foo Swee Chin & SLG except for purposes of review.

Printed in Canada

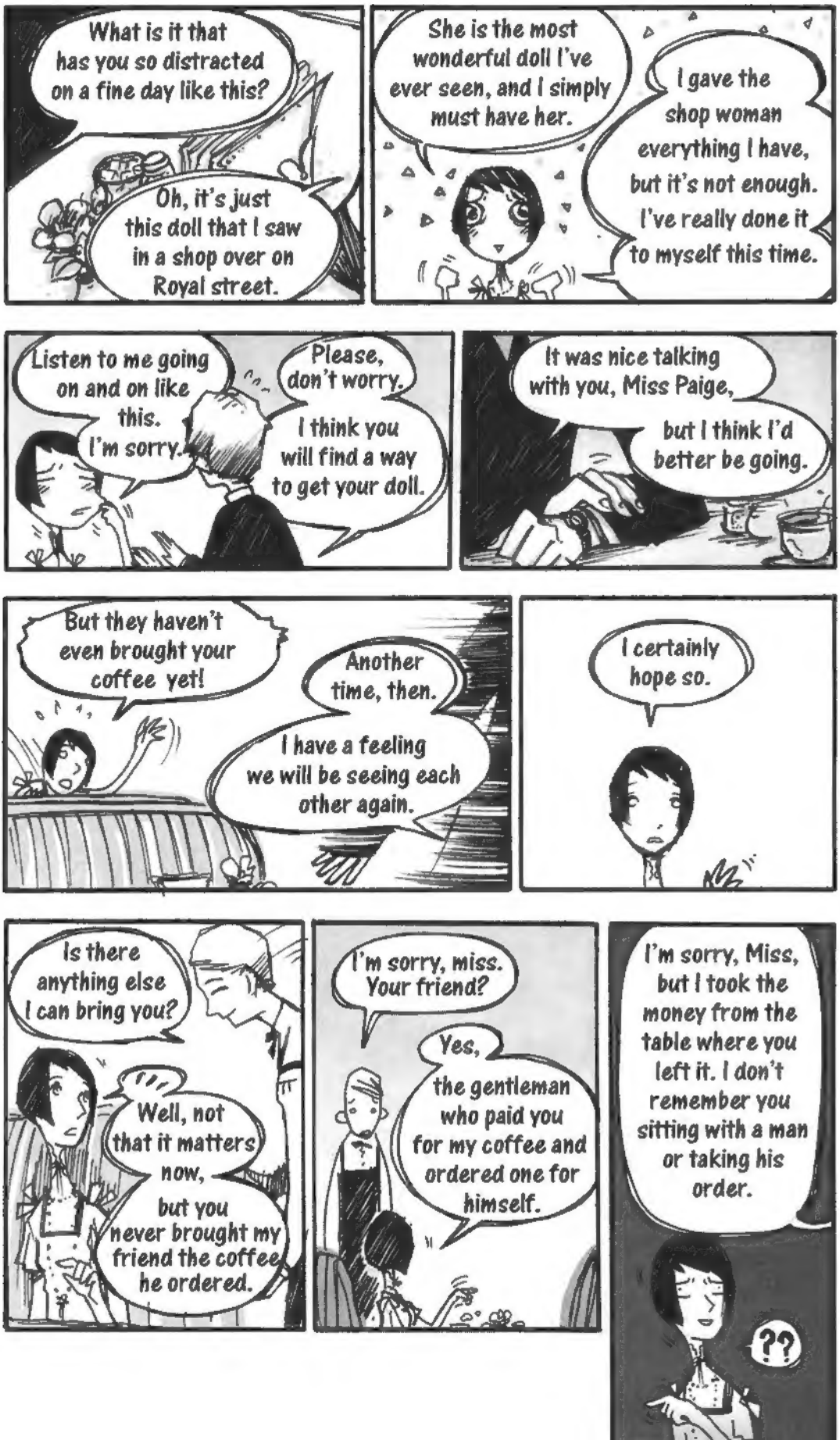

I can hear you when you talk to me.
That wasn't always so. I think you may be the first...
...but I can't know for sure.
Where did you come from?
Did someone make you?
I think that is a story for another night...
...but I will tell you about the first person I came to live with in the modern world.
For years, it seemed that I floated in and out of fairy tales...
...drifting from one magical realm to the next. Nothing seemed real...
...until one day I found myself sitting in a doll shop...
...and for the first time in my life, I was happy.
I felt safe and protected. I felt that others were protected from me.


I remember the day Paige walked into the little doll shop in the French Quarter.
I was sitting in the case,
when she pressed her beautiful face against the glass to look at mine.
She was a vision of modern beauty in my eyes...
...much different from the ladies of long ago.
Excuse me.

I would like to know how much you are asking for the doll over there.
Quite a bit, my dear.
Look, ducky darling, just come out with it.
Ann here is an antique.
I haven't even been able to place a year on her creation.
I wager she is well over one hundred years old by this point.
Right. So what's the damage?
... ...
Sold!
Thank you, and good day.
I will be by later this afternoon with the remainder
Now you've got yourself in a pinch, ducky!
How are you going to get the rest of that money?


Café au lait, please
!
Isn't that the living end.
Woo. Woo.
I gave all my money to that old biddy.
Perhaps I can help?
!
Far be it from me to turn down a free cup of coffee.
Can I join you?
Please.

I hope I didn't offend you.
Perhaps another time.
No.
I'm sorry, ducky.
I just have something on my mind.
Hey,
I didn't catch your name, by the way.
August.
That's a great name. Mine is Paige.
Pleased to meet you.
Another of the same for me, please.
So, what's your game, Mr. August?
It's just August.
Right. So, what do you do?
I think...
...I'd prefer to hear about you.


What is it that has you so distracted on a fine day like this?
Oh, it's just this doll that I saw in a shop over on Royal street.
She is the most wonderful doll I've ever seen, and I simply must have her.
I gave the shop woman everything I have, but it's not enough. I've really done it to myself this time.
Listen to me going on and on like this. I'm sorry.
Please, don't worry.
I think you will find a way to get your doll.
It was nice talking with you, Miss Paige,
but I think I'd better be going.
But they haven't even brought your coffee yet!
Another time, then.
I have a feeling we will be seeing each other again.
I certainly hope so.
Is there anything else I can bring you?
Well, not that it matters now,
but you never brought my friend the coffee he ordered.
I'm sorry, miss. Your friend?
Yes,
the gentleman who paid you for my coffee and ordered one for himself.
I'm sorry, Miss, but I took the money from the table where you left it. I don't remember you sitting with a man or taking his order.
??

Either he's touched in the head, or I am!
Put it on my tab, dear, won't you?
Of course, Miss Paige...
...but I'm afraid this will have to be the last time.
That is, until you pay off your balance.
I understand. Thank you.
What's this?

Well, I'll be!

If this isn't the living end, I don't know what is!
Just look at you, ducky!
My name is Annabelle.

There's no note.
Hmm.

Operator, please dial the doll shop on Royale street.
Thank you.

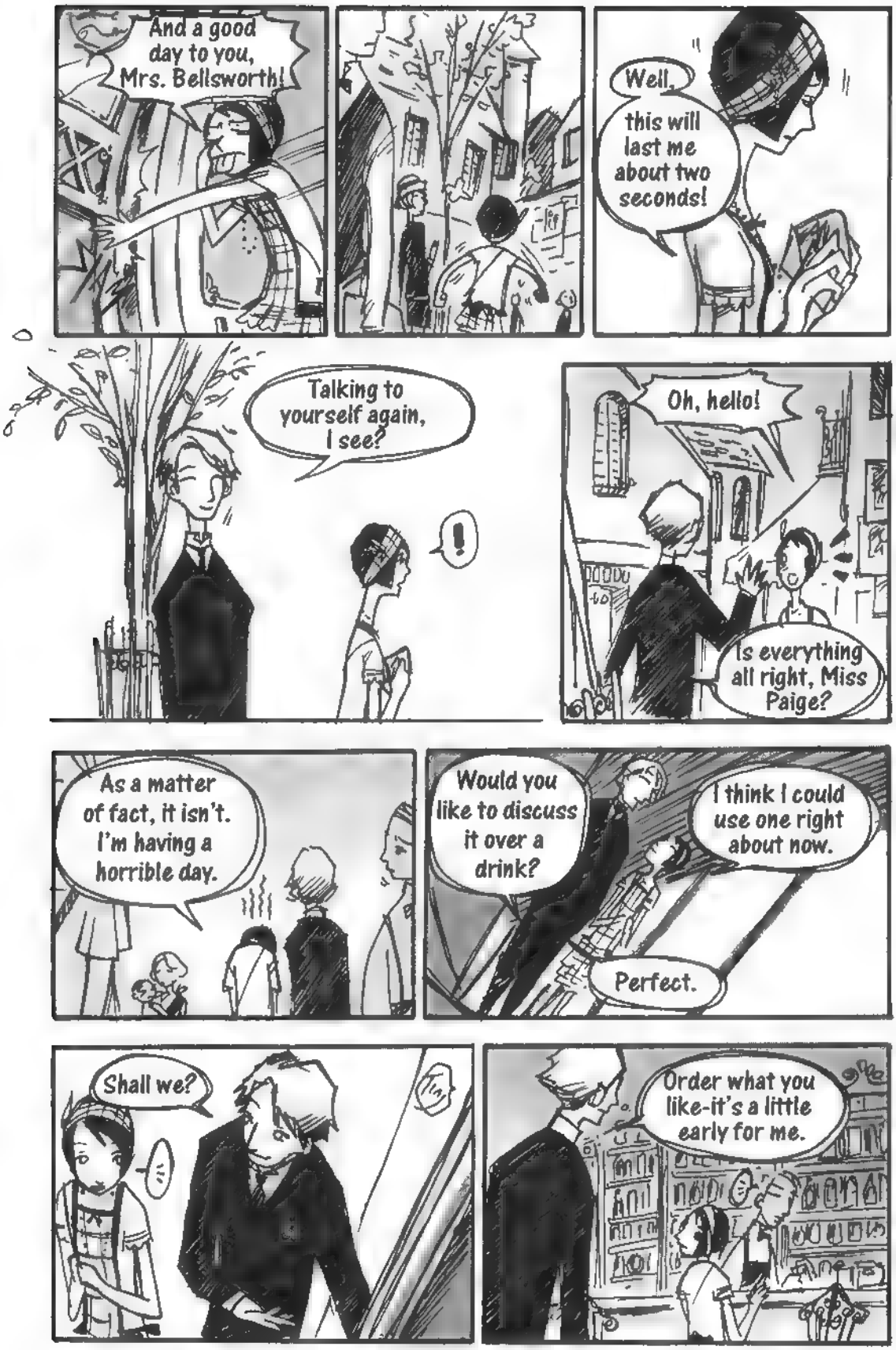
Hello?
Hello! My name is Paige.
Yes, Miss Paige! I expect that you have received your doll without mishap?

Well, yes, but...
I must say...
I was surprised when the remainder of the balance was slipped under the door
with the note attached that said I should send it right over to you.
You're lucky to have such a generous husband.
My husband?
Yes.
I'm sure I saw the shadow of a gentleman at the window when the money was slipped in.
I wonder why he didn't come in? He *is* your husband, isn't he?
Yes, of course!
Thank you, madame. I must ring off now. Good bye.
My husband? Isn't that queer.
What a riot! My husband. Well, whoever he is, he's okay in my book!
Isn't he, ducky?

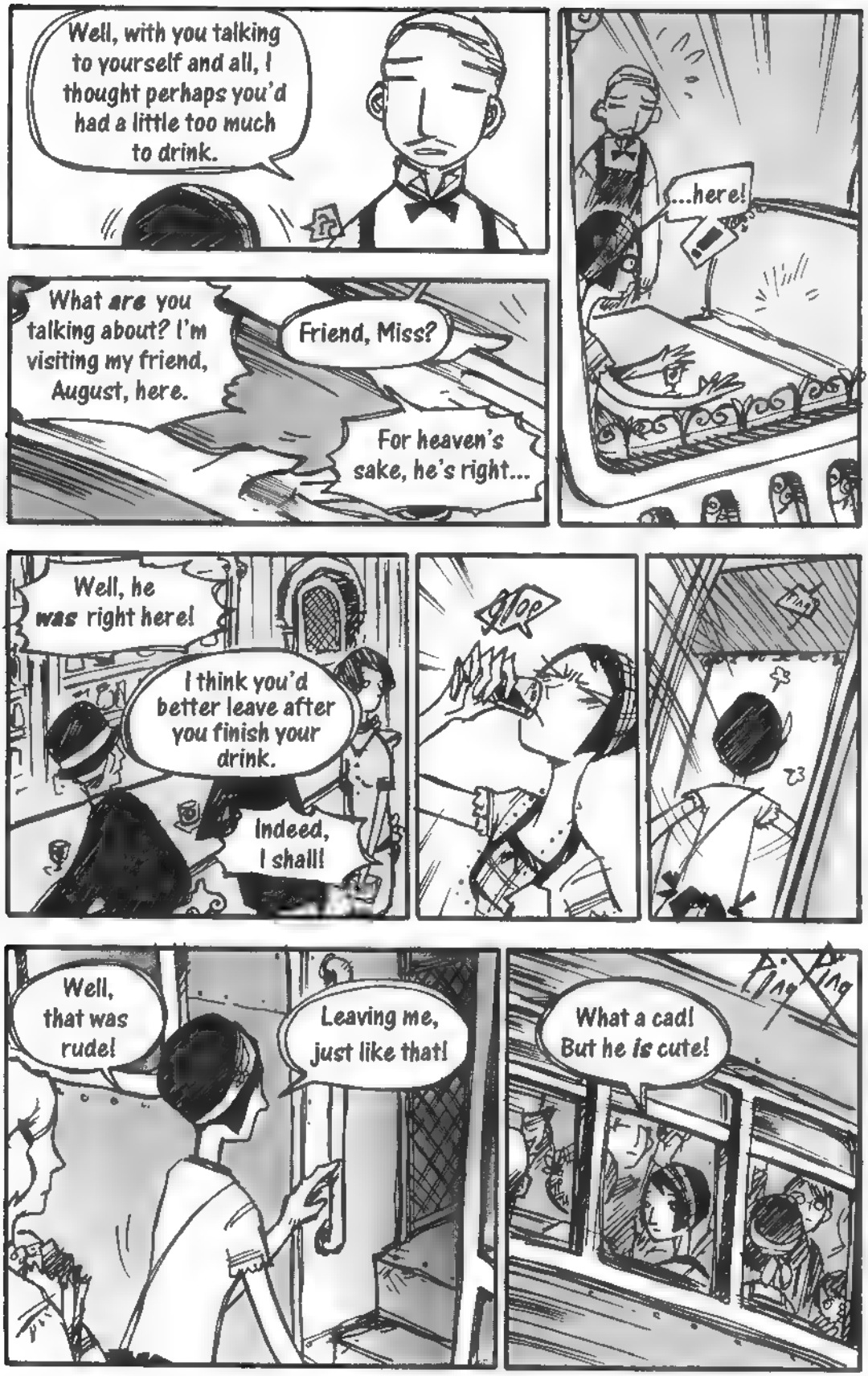
Now, what do I do with you?
Where would you like to be?
I think this will do fine.
Yes, perfect.
It looks like you have always been here.
I am so supremely happy!
What a fantastic day this turned out to be!
Annabelle, it's dinner time!
I've completely lost my head!
Well, at least now I have someone to share my meals with.
I wouldn't admit this to anyone else, mind you...
...but I'm happy to finally have a friend. I've been lonely, Annabelle.
I don't feel like I fit in – like I'm in the wrong time and place.
I understand.
Goodness!
Pong
Listen to me talking on and on like this, when I need to get some sleep before work tomorrow!
Good night, Annabelle.
Good night, ducky.

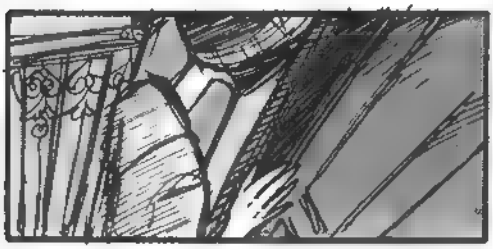
Good morning, Annabelle!
Good bye, ducky dear! I'll be home later tonight!
Well, I better get off to work. I'm late!

Late again, I see, Miss Paige.
I'm sorry, Mrs. Bellsworth. Really, I am.
I thought we had already gone over this topic, Miss Paige—that, and the matter of your attire.
I would hardly call your manner of dress appropriate.
But, it's all the rage, Mrs. Bellsworth!
Nevertheless, I'm going to have to excuse you.
You will find your week's wages, and a little something extra.
Rather generous of me, all things considered.
Are you canning me?
If you mean, am I letting you go—yes, Miss Paige, I am.
And I am afraid I'll be hard pressed to offer you a recommendation.
I see.
Well, in that case, you can stick your recommendation where the sun doesn't shine!
Well, I never!
Clearly!
If you don't mind me saying so-perhaps if you did once in a while, you might have a better disposition!
Good day, Miss Paige!

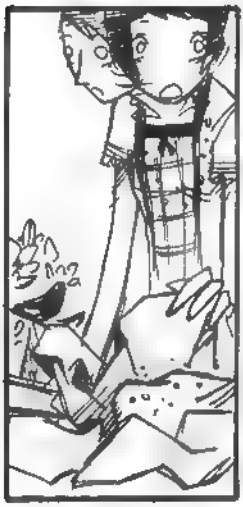

And a good day to you, Mrs. Bellsworth!
Well, this will last me about two seconds!
Talking to yourself again, I see?
!
Oh, hello!
Is everything all right, Miss Paige?
As a matter of fact, it isn't. I'm having a horrible day.
Would you like to discuss it over a drink?
I think I could use one right about now.
Perfect.
Shall we?
Order what you like-it's a little early for me.

Absinthe, please.
Are you sure you don't want anything?
No, I'm fine. Thank you.
... ...
Who are you talking to, Miss?
My friend here.
Oh, it looks like he sat down already.
Whatever you say, lady.
Thanks.
This is just what I needed.
Thanks, August.
You are more than welcome.
Maybe you can solve a little mystery for me.
And what mystery is that?
I had a little package on my doorstep waiting for me yesterday, and...
Are you okay, Miss?
Yes, of course I am! Why do you ask?


Well, with you talking to yourself and all, I thought perhaps you'd had a little too much to drink.
...here!
What are you talking about? I'm visiting my friend, August, here.
Friend, Miss?
For heaven's sake, he's right...
Well, he was right here!
I think you'd better leave after you finish your drink.
Indeed, I shall!
Glop
Ping
Well, that was rude!
Leaving me, just like that!
Ping Ping
What a cad! But he is cute!



What's this?
Oh my goodness!



Annabelle!
Who brought this?
Read the note.

Oh, there's a note!

Can you hear me?

Paige, my dear,
I am so sorry to have left you this afternoon. Please let me make it up to you. I will be waiting at the dance hall, if you should like to join me. Warmest regards...
...Augustine!

What a scream!

Isn't it the most?
Well, Annabelle, I'm off.
Look at this, ducky!
Don't go, Paige! I have a bad feeling about this.
I can't explain why, but I think I'm in love!
I have the most sublime feeling about this! Good bye, ducky darling! Hopefully I'll be home late!
She can't hear me.

You look stunning!
You don't look too bad yourself!
Are you ready to go in?
Please.

I would like a coffee.
Oh, and what would you like?
Nothing for me. thanks.
.....
You need to learn to live it up!
I'm just happy being here with you.
Can we just sit here and talk for a while?
Sure. We can sit here and talk. I would love that.
Would you like to dance?
Hello.
May I have the honor of this dance?
!
No, thank you.
That was rude,
him asking me to dance like that, when I'm clearly with someone else.

He can't see me, Paige.
I am a ghost.

Well isn't it a scream!
A ghost!

It's true!
That's why I wanted to see you...

...to explain why we can't be together.

I've heard better lines before, Mister!
If you weren't interested, you should have just said so!
And here I thought I had found a nice young man I would like to get to know better, and maybe one day...

...well, never mind that now!
I'm sorry, Paige.
I feel the same way.

I think I've fallen in love with you.

Is this some sort of a joke?

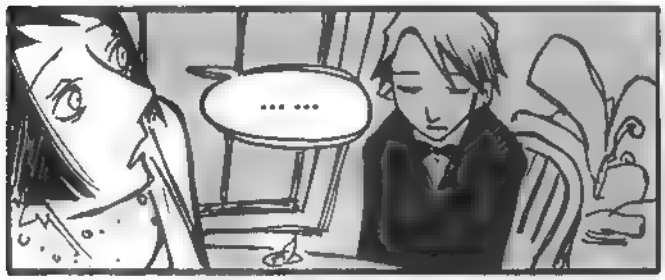
?

Is everything okay?
Yes...
...well, no!

Is there anything I can do for you?
Yes.
Leave us be, so we can work this out.

I'm sorry, did you say 'us'?
Yes! My friend and I!

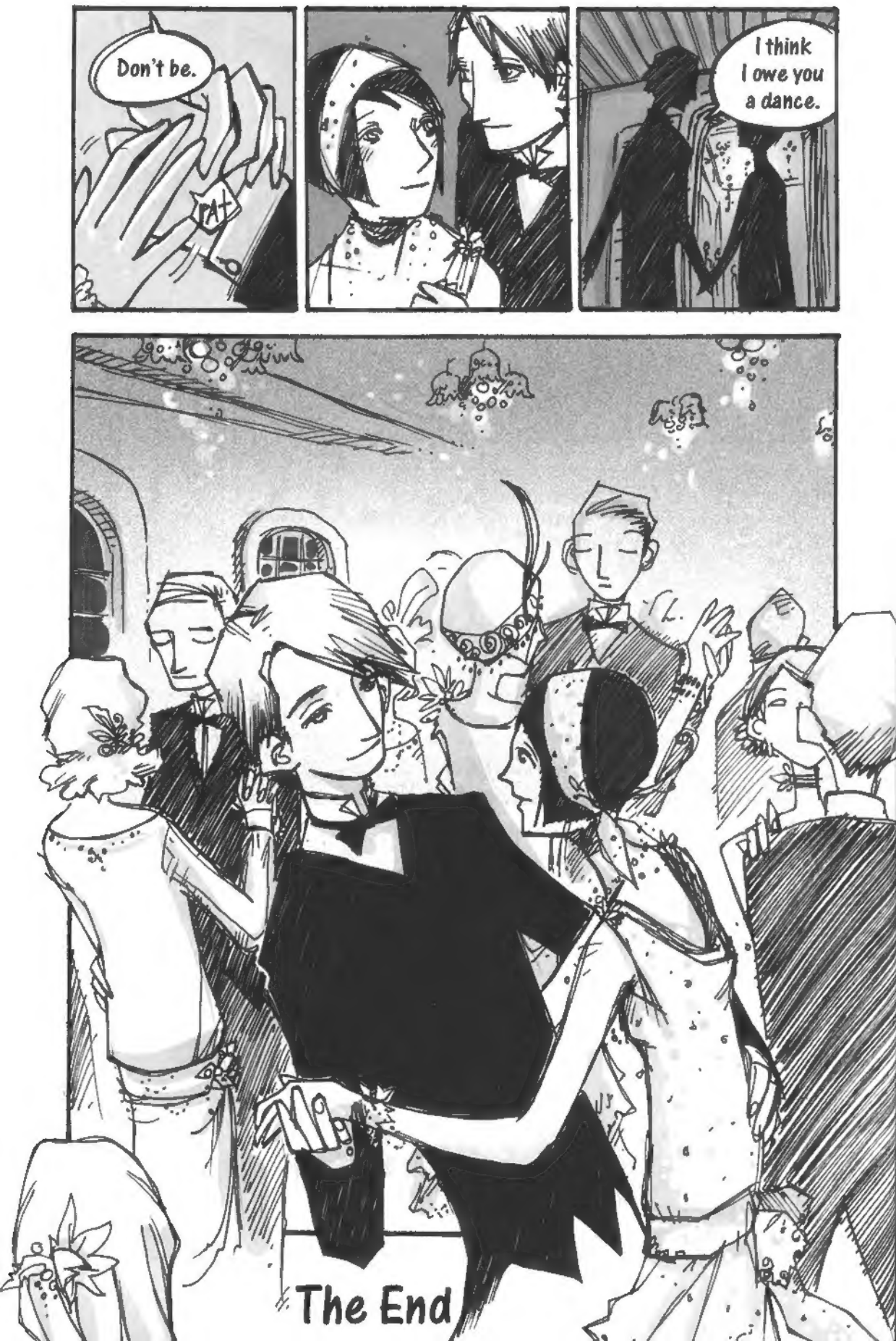
I'm sorry. I don't see anyone at this table but you!


... ...

You don't see him?
I'm sorry, Miss.

Gasp!
?
Paige, wait!

What's the commotion?
What happened?
Who is that?
Are they all right?
August, why can't they hear me?
Am I...?
Yes, my dear.
I'm so very sorry.
.....


Don't be.
I think I owe you a dance.
The End

Nightmares and Fairy Tales issue #8 – March 2004!

Serena Valentino & FSc

Annabelle recounts
the story of Little Red Riding Hood...

Luna is sent to live with her mysterious grandmother, who keeps a menagerie filled with wolves and other enchanting creatures... a grandmother who is hiding a dark family secret that Luna will soon reveal.

Nightmares & Fairy Tales

Hello sweeties!

After reading this issue, months and months after I wrote it... it occured to me that this issue is very different from the other stories I've done for N&F. I see it as rather romantic - a sweet little ghost story. I'm really happy that I was able to write this story, as it was more about Paige than anything else. I'm very drawn to characters like Paige, and I'm very fascinated by the 1920's, so I really enjoyed getting to know Paige, something I don't get to do very often with this series...getting to know a character that is. I very much enjoy writing every single issue. So I hope you enjoyed reading it as much I did writing it.

The *Nightmares & Fairy Tales* Trade Paperback will be released in March of 2004. My sweet and talented friend Tommy Kovac will be writing the introduction, and there will be some wonderful guest pages from Jhonen Vasquez as well as some other fantastic SLG creators.

Once again we would like to thank all of you for your lovely letters and email. And I would like to thank those of you who came by the SLG workshop in November.

Thank you for joining us for this issue... I'm really excited about our next issue. I think it's going to be the goriest one yet.

Until next time,
Serena